

working people and middle-income people and young people get involved in the political process, if they let the Congress and the President hear from them, if they make the political leaders of this country understand what their needs are and they will get involved, we can turn this country around.

We should not be proud that the wealthiest people have seen huge increases in their income and their wealth at the same time as we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any industrialized nation. We should not be proud that 43 million Americans have no health insurance and that we are the only country in the industrialized world without a national health insurance system. We should not be proud that the CEOs make over 300 times what their workers make and that in the midst of the so-called economic boom, the average American worker today is earning less than was the case 25 years ago.

But ultimately to turn that around, to make the Government of the United States work for the middle class, work for working families, rather than for upper-income people, people are going to have to get involved in the process. They are going to have to vote. They are going to have to be informed about the issues. They are going to have to run for office. They are going to have to revitalize American democracy and pay tribute to the founders of this country who gave us the radical concept of democracy.

So I would hope that all of our people, especially the young people who are turning their backs to our Democratic system, get involved and stand up and fight for the rights of ordinary people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining me this evening.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### COLORADO CATTLE CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite those Members of the Republican Conference who may be monitoring tonight's proceedings and have something that they would like to add in the next hour during this special order to come on down to the floor and join in. I secure this hour every now and then on behalf of the Republican Conference just for that purpose.

One of the topics I wanted to discuss was with respect to some good news in agriculture over the last couple of weeks. Because while the bull is still loose on Wall Street, months after the

analysts and pundits first began warning in earnest of overpriced stocks and certainly financial meltdowns, another young crop of fresh-from-college-20-somethings with a computer and a catchy slogan has launched their initial public offerings and made millions.

Granted, short of cashing in their stock options, their net worth is only on paper and few Internet start-ups have yet to post real profits. But the investor cash fueling the IPO madness is real, and leading economic indicators suggest no predicted slowdown in the economy.

□ 1845

Consumer spending is up while unemployment rates are down. Business sector productivity, personal income and new home starts, all important indicators, are all on the rise.

Yet while that bull stampedes through the streets of New York, many of the cattle along the dusty cattle roads of eastern Colorado are going nowhere. That just might change soon. Until this month, the Clinton administration has done little to help America's cattle industry and cattle ranchers in their decades-long trade dispute with the European Union over U.S. growth hormones which meant that Colorado's cattle intended for slaughter and export to European consumers were banned and banned on the basis of dubious science.

Under prior World Trade Organization rulings, the European Union was required to drop its ban on U.S. beef imports absent risk assessments and scientific justification by May 13, 1999. The European Union refused to do so and in response the United States was notified of the World Trade Organization's intent to impose a 100 percent retaliatory tariff on approximately \$202 million of European Union products. This level of retaliation is estimated to be far short of the true value of U.S. beef that would be exported to the European Union absent the ban, but it is enough to get the attention of those nations which might utilize unfair trade tactics in the future.

Colorado agriculture increasingly depends upon the export market to expand sales and increase revenues and to expand world trade and agriculture has a significant impact on both the U.S. trade balance and on specific commodities and individual farmers. The cards are stacked against farmers and ranchers to begin with. No sector of the economy is subject to more international trade barriers than agriculture. The import quotas, high tariffs, government-buying monopolies and import bans imposed by other nations coupled with the overwhelming number of trade sanctions and embargoes imposed on other countries by our own government cost the American agriculture industry billions of dollars each year in lost export opportunities. These barriers continue to grow despite the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT, and the North American

Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. Without question, they are devastating the ability for American producers to compete effectively, particularly at a time when exports now account for over 30 percent of U.S. farm cash receipts and nearly 40 percent of all agricultural production.

This particular dispute over the presence of growth-promoting hormones dates back to 1989 when the European Union put into effect a ban on the production and importation of meat containing such compounds. Growth-promoting hormones are widely used in the United States as well as other top meat exporting countries to speed up growth rates and produce leaner meat for consumers who display an increasing preference for reduced fat and cholesterol diets. Hormones used within the U.S. are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture and are ones which occur naturally in an animal's body or that mimic naturally occurring compounds. The European Union banned the production and importation of meat derived from animals treated with hormones following an incident where a young boy was harmed after ingesting a concentrated quantity of an unregulated hormone produced in Europe. Citing extensive scientific evidence that U.S. growth hormones have been proven safe, the United States challenged the European Union's ban on the basis that it violates a 1994 Uruguay Round agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The sanitary and phytosanitary standards agreement requires a scientific basis for measures which restrict trade based on health or safety concerns. The World Trade Organization ruled in 1997 that the ban did indeed violate several provisions of those sanitary and phytosanitary standards agreements and ordered the European Union to eliminate the meat hormone ban by May 13, 1999. When the ban was not lifted last month, the United States decided to take action in the form of retaliatory tariffs.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to pick up a newspaper today without reading about the extraordinary resilience of the United States economy and the significant profits being reaped by corporations and investors alike. Yet it is also difficult for me and other Members of Congress representing rural districts to talk with our neighbors back home, conduct town meetings or read through our constituent mail without learning of yet more foreclosures, defaults and farm auctions. Most of these people are not sharing in the windfall. Indeed, farm country is still in serious trouble and there is no evidence things are getting better. Low commodity prices, disease, weather-related problems, coupled with declining export opportunities, weak demand and over-regulation have taken a devastating toll on agriculture. Real farm income has fallen dramatically over the last 2 years and real families are feeling the effects. While Congress recently helped